

Claims

1. A content switch for use in routing packets in a computer based communications system comprising:
 - a parser for parsing a schema document associated with a packet and containing routing rules; and
 - a routing instruction processor to interpret the routing rules in the schema document.
2. The content switch as defined in claim 1 for parsing XML – based language.
3. A method of carrying out content switching in a computer-based communications system comprising:
 - determining a routing action to be taken on packets of a flow associated with a document written according to a schema wherein the determination is made by applying routing rules contained in the schema to elements parsed from the document.
4. The method as defined in claim 3 wherein an XML based language is used.
5. A system for use in routing traffic in a computer based communications network comprising:
 - a content switch having a routing instruction processor capable of interpreting routing rules in a document written according to a schema associated with a packet and applying the rules to elements in the network, the rules being parsed from the document, and means to determine a routing action to be performed on packets from a packet flow associated with the document.
6. The system as defined in claim 5 for parsing XML-based languages.

7. A schema stored on a computer-readable medium for use in a computer based communications system, the schema including routing rules, which, when accessed to parse a document written in the language of the schema, provide routing actions to be taken on packets belonging to a traffic flow associated with the document.
8. The schema as defined in claim 7 wherein the routing rules are defined by an application provider.